Your notes

GCSE English Language: revision notes

Directed writing

Contents

1. Start here: what directed writing is
2. Using the texts well
3. Getting the form and voice right
4. Exam tip
5. Common mistakes
6. Key terms
7. Quick questions
8. What to do next

Start here: what directed writing is

- In Cambridge IGCSE First Language English Paper 2, Section A is **directed writing**. You read one or two texts, answer Question 1(a) analysing and evaluating their ideas, then in 1(b) use and develop that information in your own piece of discursive or **argumentative writing**.
- The form is set for you: a letter, article, speech, report, interview or journal entry, with a named **audience** and purpose, such as a letter to your head teacher.
- Marks are for reading (how well you use, **evaluate** and develop the ideas in the texts) and writing (style, structure and accuracy).

Using the texts well

- Don't just copy points: **evaluate** them. Say which ideas are convincing and which are weak, and why.
- Develop ideas by explaining consequences, adding examples and linking points from both texts.
- Use your own words. Short references are fine, but long copying scores poorly.

Getting the form and voice right

- Letter: address the person, give a clear reason for writing, end politely. Article: a lively headline and an engaging opening. Speech: direct address ("you"), rhetorical questions, a strong ending. Report: a clear title, headings and a formal tone.
- Match the **register** to the **audience**: formal for a head teacher or council, more relaxed for a school magazine, but always accurate.
- Plan: an opening that sets out your view, three or four developed paragraphs, then a conclusion that answers the task.

Exam tip

- Spend about ten minutes reading and planning, and keep a few minutes to check spelling, punctuation and paragraphing.

Common mistakes

- Retelling the texts in order instead of arguing your own view.
- Forgetting the **audience**, so a letter to a mayor sounds like a chat with a friend.

Key terms

Directed writing	Writing in a set form, for a set audience, using ideas from given texts.
Discursive writing	Writing that discusses different sides of an issue.
Argumentative writing	Writing that argues for one point of view.
Register	How formal or informal language is.
Evaluate	Judge how convincing or important something is.
Audience	The people a piece of writing is for.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. In directed writing, where do your ideas mainly come from?
2. What does "evaluate" mean in directed writing?
3. Which feature suits a speech?
4. Which feature suits a report?
5. What register should a letter to a head teacher use?
6. What is discursive writing?
7. Which is a good way to develop an idea from a text?
8. What should the opening of an argument do?

Answers

1. The texts you are given
2. Judge how convincing the ideas are
3. Direct address and rhetorical questions
4. A clear title, headings and a formal tone
5. Formal
6. Writing that discusses different sides of an issue
7. Explain its consequences and add an example
8. Set out your view clearly

Your notes

What to do next

Practise 10 questions on this topic

Try 3 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

Free revision for GCSE and KS3 at lycolearn.co.uk. Some notes are for one exam board only, and say so in brackets.

Your notes